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FM AMCONSUL JEDDAH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8953  
INFO RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 6305  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JEDDAH 000237

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RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN; PARIS FOR ZEYA; LONDON FOR  
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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED ADDEE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/25/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIA: GULF BUSINESSMAN SECRETLY MINISTERS  
TO CHRISTIANS

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana C. Gfoeller for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: A prominent businessman working for a major Gulf corporation recently confided to the Consul General that he is an ordained minister, who secretly counsels fellow Christians within Saudi Arabia. During a dinner at another Western Consul General's residence, the gentleman detailed his conversion to the Protestant faith after he was punished during his youth for political activities in his native Philippines and outlined the challenges faced by Christians within the Kingdom. END SUMMARY  
GOVERNMENT DISSENT LEADS TO CONVERSION

12. (C) At a recent dinner party held at the residence of a Western Consul General in Jeddah, the US Consul General was quietly approached by a Filipino businessman working for a major Gulf corporation within the Kingdom. He initially introduced himself as a Christian, and after that did not illicit the recognition he had expected, he repeated, "I'm a Christian, a born-again Christian" in an attempt to indicate that he was not just a layman but an ordained minister. The gentleman, who is in his mid-thirties and is well-tied to the Western business and diplomatic community, explained to the CG that he regularly met with other Christians in Saudi Arabia in order to help them to explore their faith. Though seated at the VIP table with other guests, including a Western ambassador, the businessman described in whispers to the CG his own conversion after having been arrested five times for leading anti-government protests as a student in the Philippines. One such incident left him so badly beaten that he was confined to his home for weeks of recovery. It was during this period that the businessman walked out to the garden of his house and claimed to hear the voice of God calling him to convert. Having previously been an atheist, the gentleman sought advice from his grandfather, which eventually led him to become a born-again Christian and, ultimately, an ordained Protestant minister.

ADMINISTERING TO THE FAITHFUL

13. (C) The Filipino minister explained that he frequently meets with other Christians in Jeddah to hold small services in secret. The vast majority of attendees are other Filipinos, who meet in groups of three or four at a variety

of people's homes. According to the businessman, most of his contacts are lower-income laborers who have converted from Catholicism. The greatest challenge is the absence of Bibles. Though he did manage recently to smuggle in a set of CDs with the entire Bible copied onto them, this did not prove useful as the members of his "congregation" rarely have access to computers. He did print some paper copies off the CDs, but he admitted that these are cumbersome and dangerous to carry around the country.

Gfoeller